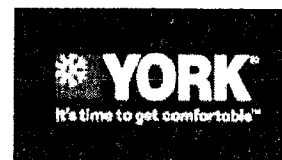


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Marine To Marry Fiancee in Videoconference Wedding

She's in Florida; He's in Africa



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Francie Mercado, 25, will be at the University of Florida when she gets married via videoconference today. Her fiancé, Jason Druding, 26, is a Marine stationed in Djibouti, Africa. (ABC NEWS)

abc NEWS

Dec. 22, 2005 — A U.S. Marine stationed in Djibouti, Africa, will marry his betrothed in Florida today in a ceremony performed by a justice of the peace in Montana.

Cpl. Jason Druding met Francie Mercado, 25, on Yahoo! online personals in March. They met in person in May and got engaged in August — the same day Druding, 26, left for Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. They will be married by videoconference today in a first-of-its-kind wedding.

The event is being made possible by Freedom Calls, a nonprofit in New York that offers videoconferencing, telephone and Internet services to help U.S. troops overseas take part in important family events back home. The justice of the peace is from Montana because Montana is the only state that allows double-proxy wedding, which means neither the bride nor the groom are physically present.

Mercado's parents are in Puerto Rico. Her brother will be with her at the University of Florida to give her away, and her 3-year-old son will be the ring bearer.

The bride and groom are still trying to figure out what to do when the justice of the peace says, "You may kiss the bride."

"The joke around the company is I'm going to find a sensitive Marine," Druding said. "I'm probably going to be stuck with my pillow and that's about it."

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While the ceremony, scheduled for 3:15 p.m. ET, will last 10 minutes, the videoconference will last about 90 minutes so they can have a "reception." The events will be broadcast on a 6-foot-tall screen.

Freedom Calls arranged for donations for her dress, veil, tiara, flowers, cake and champagne flutes. The nonprofit plans to do another videoconference for the couple when their son is born next year.

John Harlow, Freedom Calls' executive director, said that about 2,000 soldiers used the network each day to keep their commitment to both their families and the military. Freedom Calls has been used for events like parent-teacher conferences, adoption proceedings, first communions and bar mitzvahs, as well as, everyday events like sitting down to dinner with the family.

"Right now, it's economically and technologically feasible for a soldier to come back from a day of battle and then spend virtual time with their family and virtually tuck their kids into bed at night," Harlow said.

The Freedom Calls Foundation is based out of Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

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RE Double Proxy Marriage - Enquiry From Israeli Family Law Firm
Dear Sir/Madam,

I found an article over the web published in Montana Lawyer Magazine in August 2004 in which Montana is referred to as the only US state where double proxy marriage is legal. This e-mail was given as a reference at the end of the article.

Our Tel-Aviv based firm specializes in family law. Civil marriage does not exist in Israel and we get regular enquiries about the possibility of legal proxy marriage, and are always looking for better options.

would you kindly confirm that double proxy marriage is legal in Montana and state whether there are any citizenship as well as residency requirements. In particular, could an Israeli citizen and a non-US citizen living in Israel marry in a double proxy marriage in Montana ? Could an American citizen who also has Israeli citizenship marry someone who is neither an Israeli or American citizen in Montana in a double proxy marriage?

If there are any contacts in Montana that you could recommend so that we can explore the possibility of working together on this, I would appreciate it . Our contact details are above.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Borochoy, adv.

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E-Mail: borochoy@family-laws.co.il
Websites : www.family-laws.co.il.
www.inheritance-law.co.il

Proxy Marriage-A good reason to Change the Law
From: Naed Strenner [mailto:under_achiever42@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2006 8:44 AM
To: mailbox@montanabar.org
Cc: under_achiever42@hotmail.com
Subject: Proxy marriage

Dear Sirs,

I was wondering if you would be able to point me in the right direction regarding an attorney the does proxy marriages. My wife to be is Chinese and I'm an American living in China. we have no future plans of ever going to the U.S. to live.
Thank you.
Naed

Proxy marriage

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A **proxy marriage** is a marriage in which either the bride or the groom is not physically present for the wedding. During the solemnization of the marriage, based upon a power of attorney, a stand-in, or proxy, acts on behalf of one of the parties. If neither party is present, it is called a **Double-proxy Marriage**.

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History

It was common for European monarchs and nobility to be wed by proxy marriage. A famous example of this is the marriage of Napoleon I of France to Marie Louise, Duchess of Parma. Catherine of Aragon wed Prince Arthur by proxy. A famous 17th-century painting by Peter Paul Rubens depicts the proxy marriage of Marie de Medici.^[1]

During the early 1900s, proxy marriages increased significantly when many Japanese picture brides arrived at Angel Island, California. Since the early 20th century it has been most commonly used for marriages involving members of the military on active duty.^[1]

Various Internet sites offer to arrange proxy and double-proxy marriages for a fee.

Legality

United States

Proxy marriages are illegal in all US states except California, Colorado, Texas and Montana. In California, it was legalized in 2004 and is only available to members of Armed Forces currently deployed and unable to attend a service. Montana is the only state that allows double-proxy marriage.^[2] Not all states fully recognize proxy marriages, but legal precedent dictates that states recognize proxy marriage as at least a common law marriage.^[3]

Other countries

Mexico and Paraguay both offer proxy marriages for a fee. Proxy marriages through the consulate of Paraguay in Tel Aviv are recognized by Israeli law.

References

1. ^{a b} Cafazzo, Debbie. "Marriage by proxy used for ages", *Tacoma News Tribune*, 2006-06-01.